



Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation in sustainable land use planning since 2006

The Community Action Project (CAP) administers the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC), which is comprised of regional and local organizations, community groups, and concerned individuals who promote public participation in land use and resource planning to ensure a healthy human, natural, and economic environment now and in the future.

Learn more at www.calaverascap.com

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In this edition of the ReCAP...

1. [Next CPC Meeting](#)

2. [BOS & PC Meetings](#)
3. [The Calaveras Planning Coalition would like prospective development project applicants to know](#)
4. [Local special districts reeling from pandemic](#)
5. [Celebrate your birthday with CAP](#)
6. [Did you know...CAP has water conservation tips for you!](#)
7. [The Central California Town That Keeps Sinking](#)
8. [California eyes shuttered malls, stores for new housing](#)
9. ['Waiting to happen': the California region where masks are taboo – and cases are rising](#)
10. [Sierra Nevada Funding Resources](#)
11. [Poem: Sitting Shiva by Todd Davis](#)

Join Us!

*Get a glimpse into what CPC membership is like by attending a meeting.
There is no commitment, just show up and listen in!*

Next Calaveras Planning Coalition Meeting
June 7, 2021 3 P.M. - 5 P.M.
New Members Welcome at CPC Meetings

Organizations, groups, and individuals (known as associate members) may join the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC). Prospective members may attend two consecutive meetings before making a final decision on membership in the Coalition. The membership form is a pledge to support and advocate for the Coalition's eleven Land Use and Development Principles, which you will find on our website:

www.calaverascap.com.

There is no membership fee. However, members are encouraged to donate to the Community Action Project/Calaveras Planning Coalition. Visitors and prospective members will, by necessity, be excluded from attorney/client privileged discussions.

If you are interested in membership, please email CPC Facilitator Tom Infusino, tomi@volcano.net, to receive a membership form, agenda, and the Zoom meeting connection.

To help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our county, all CAP and CPC meetings will be held online via Zoom until restrictions are lifted by the Public Health Department.

BOS Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 8, 2021

[Agenda](#)

Planning Commission Meeting June 10, 2021

Cancelled

Local News

The Calaveras Planning Coalition would like prospective development project applicants to know

May 27, 2021 / The Calaveras Enterprise

Editor

The Calaveras Planning Coalition would like prospective development project applicants to know that a checklist is now available to help applicants fulfill the goals and satisfy the policies in the county's 2019 General Plan. The checklist is available on the CAP/CPC website at calaverascap.com. We hope that project proponents will use this checklist and join us all in building better communities for life in the 21st century.

As the state's general plan guidelines tell us, "The general plan is more than the legal underpinning for land use decisions; it is a vision about how a community will grow, reflecting community priorities and values while shaping the future." Our county general plan expresses a desire to create a better future with a diverse economy, workforce housing, improved roads, conserved agricultural land, efficient water use, fire safety and peace and quiet. While that may sound simple, the county's general plan is far from simple.

The county general plan is a lengthy document divided into multiple elements. Some provisions are mandatory, while others are optional. To complicate matters further, the county has yet to draft and approve dozens of standards and practices needed to implement the general plan. This creates opportunities/burdens for project applicants to propose their own methods to fund and staff emergency services, improve infrastructure financing, reduce noise, prevent light pollution, conserve water, recharge groundwater, manage storm water runoff, control erosion, and protect streamside wildlife habitat. The county undermines the goals of the general plan by putting off implementation measures like these indefinitely, leaving project applicants and the rest of us to work extra hard to achieve those goals.

Ultimately, development project applicants are challenged to ferret out of each general plan element any requirements and any opportunities/burdens that may apply to their projects. The CPC is pleased to provide applicants with that information in one place for easy reference as they create their project proposals.

Megan Fiske,

CAP/CPC Outreach Coordinator

Local special districts reeling from pandemic

Dakota Morlan / The Calaveras Enterprise / June 2, 2021

Many of California's special districts have been financially crippled by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Calaveras County is no exception.

More than 30% of special districts statewide have had staff cutbacks and over 40% have had to significantly reduce services, according to Dane Wadle, senior public affairs field coordinator for the California Special Districts Association's Sierra network.

"Special districts, which provide vital services that many cities and counties cannot, such as fire protection and access to reliable water and electricity, are struggling under the burden of a \$1.92 billion in unmet need, with that number growing every day," Wadle said.

The revenue losses, which have been most substantial among fire protection, healthcare/emergency services, recreation and park, port and harbor/transit and utility districts, were in many cases fueled by pandemic response operations redirecting funds and "skyrocketing" expenses due to mandated health and safety protocols.

Calaveras County has 42 independent special districts, some of which have been heavily impacted.

The Mokelumne Hill Veterans Memorial District, responsible for facilities including the Town Hall, Shutter Tree Town Park and DK Horse Arena, had their budget reduced by 20% due to

COVID-related revenue losses, according to Wadle.

The San Andreas Recreation and Park District, which manages the Town Hall as well as park used by softball leagues and other special events, lost roughly 40% of revenues from renting out the Hall.

The Mark Twain Health Care District recorded \$275,000 in operating losses, as the district provided a significant portion of care for free.

"While the district has been providing uninterrupted health care service to the county, the impacts remain," Wadle said.

For the Calaveras County Water District (CCWD), which serves roughly 13,000 water and 5,000 wastewater customers, revenue losses from Gov. Gavin Newsom's executive order prohibiting water shutoffs and suspended late water fees have been substantial.

"Between loss of fees and delinquencies to date, it is estimated to be approximately \$200,000-\$350,000," Director of Administrative Services for CCWD Rebecca Callen said. "The delinquencies are still slated to be recovered in some form, whether it be through legislative assistance funding or through payback solutions with customers."

Despite these losses, special districts have not received access to COVID-19 relief federal funding programs, unlike other government entities including the state, schools, cities and counties.

"Federal and state governments funding for local government has been directed solely to the city and county levels, and yet as special districts are public entities they also have not benefited from the COVID relief programs for businesses and nonprofits, such as PPP, tax credits or grants," Wadle said.

At CCWD, staff is actively working with legislators to ensure that future funding includes special districts.

"Access to COVID Relief funding has been limited to FEMA Public Assistance Act funding from the 2020 declaration. Due to the high volume of respondents (every local agency in the country), CCWD is awaiting review by FEMA and the ability to submit a reimbursement claim of approximately \$50,000," Callen said. "The other forms of relief were limited to cities and counties. Unfortunately, special districts were not included as approved respondents in the initial relief packages."

However, Wadle says that the \$57.95 billion in COVID-19 relief funds allocated by Congress to California should be enough to aid the state's special districts.

"Of this the state will have received a total \$36.14 billion in discretionary dollars to address COVID-19 impacts," he said. "Through the American Rescue Plan Act, Congress has provided a flexible solution by explicitly empowering states with authority to transfer Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery monies to special districts. We urge California to use this authority to its fullest extent and distribute a portion of (it) to California's special districts for the benefit of the millions of Californians we serve statewide."

Wadle added there is precedent for this use of relief funds in Colorado and Oregon, and that Colorado has indicated a plan to share their Rescue Act funds as well.


“Special districts would utilize funding allocated by the state to benefit their residents, stabilize services, and boost the local economy,” he said. “They would do this through reimbursing expenditures related to the pandemic response, assisting their residents with utility arrearages, restoring service levels following a year’s worth of revenue losses, rehiring or boosting frontline workers with premium pay, (and) investing in critical water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure after a year of delayed, deferred and canceled projects.”

Do you live in Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Stanislaus or Tuolumne County? Your water agency wants to hear from you!

Take the Water Survey Now!

This survey is being conducted by regional water management agencies to support a study of community water and wastewater needs in Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Stanislaus and Tuolumne Counties. The information will help these agencies advocate for and seek grant and other funding to meet these community needs.

**How many more candles, slippers,
potted plants, or power drills do you
need?**





When your next birthday rolls around, ask your friends and family to make a donation in your name to the Community Action Project/Calaveras Planning Coalition instead of giving you a toaster or a set of socket wrenches. Celebrate your birthday and a great cause at the same time. It's easy. Here are some tips.

1. Tell people about CAP/CPC and why our mission is important to you. Tell your story. That's what they want to hear.
2. Spread the word with Facebook, Twitter, or whatever platform you prefer. Reach out with personal emails, notes, texts, or let your birthday wishes be known in person.
3. Make your birthday the deadline for gift giving.
4. Ask everyone to be generous, but let them know that no gift is too small and all gifts will be greatly appreciated. You may also ask for a specific amount, \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 or whatever is appropriate. You know your audience.
5. Please direct your birthday well-wishers to www.calaverascap.com. Ask them to click on "donate" or mail their birthday donation to CAP/CPC, PO Box 935, San Andreas, CA 95249.
6. Ask your birthday buddies to let CAP/CPC know they are donating in your honor.

7. Another option is to just ask guests to bring your gift to the big birthday bash you can't wait to have now that you've been vaccinated against Covid-19.

CAP/CPC will feature the most compelling stories in the ReCAP and on our website.
And many happy returns of the day!

Did you know...
*You can find water conservation tips &
more on CAP's Climate Page?*



Learn more about actions you can take to reduce greenhouse gasses, promote community resilience, mitigate the effects of climate change, and much more!

Regional News

The Central California Town That Keeps Sinking

In California's San Joaquin Valley, the farming town of Corcoran has a multimillion-dollar problem. It is almost impossible to see, yet so vast it takes NASA scientists using satellite technology to fully grasp.

Corcoran is sinking.

Over the past 14 years, the town has sunk as much as 11.5 feet in some places — enough to swallow the entire first floor of a two-story house and to at times make Corcoran one of the fastest-sinking areas in the country, according to experts with the United States Geological Survey.

Subsidence is the <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/25/us/corcoran-california-sinking.html> technical term for the phenomenon — the slow-motion deflation of land that occurs when large amounts of water are withdrawn from deep underground, causing underlying sediments to fall in on themselves.

Each year, Corcoran's entire 7.47 square miles and its 21,960 residents sink just a little bit, as the soil dips anywhere from a few inches to nearly two feet. No homes, buildings or roads crumble. Subsidence is not so dramatic, but its impact on the town's topography and residents' pocketbooks has been significant. And while the most recent satellite data showed that Corcoran has sunk only about four feet in some areas since 2015, a water management agency estimates the city will sink another six to 11 feet over the next 19 years.

Already, the casings of drinking-water wells have been crushed. Flood zones have shifted. The town levee had to be rebuilt at a cost of \$10 million — residents' property tax bills increased roughly \$200 a year for three years, a steep price in a place where the median income is \$40,000.

The main reason Corcoran has been subsiding is not nature. It's agriculture.

In Corcoran and other parts of the San Joaquin Valley, the land has gradually but steadily dropped primarily because agricultural companies have for decades pumped underground water to irrigate their crops, according to the U.S.G.S. California Water Science Center.

When farmers fail to get enough surface water from local rivers or from canals that bring Northern California river water into the San Joaquin Valley, they turn to what is known as groundwater — the water beneath the Earth's surface that must be pumped out. They have done so for generations.

Corcoran's situation is not unique. In Texas, the Houston-Galveston area has been sinking since the 1800s. Parts of Arizona, Louisiana and New Jersey have dealt with subsidence problems. The foundations of [Mexico City](#) churches have famously tilted, and [one 2012 study](#) found that Venice was subsiding at a rate of .07 inches per year.

But how Corcoran came to dip nearly 12 feet in more than a decade is a tale not of land but of water, and the ways in which, in ag-dominated Central California, water is power — so much so that many residents and local leaders downplay the town's sinkage or ignore it

entirely. Few in Corcoran are eager to criticize agricultural companies that provide jobs in a struggling region for helping to cause a little-known geological problem no one can see.

“It’s a risk for us,” said Mary Gonzales-Gomez, a lifelong Corcoran resident and chairwoman of the Kings County Board of Education. “We all know that, but what are we going to do? There’s really nothing that we can do. And I don’t want to move.”

An altered landscape

It is known as the Corcoran Bowl — an area amid the agricultural fields in and near Kings County that stretches at times up to 60 miles. The bowl is the region of deep sinkage in the land, with Corcoran at the center — a sinkhole at a snail’s pace.

Jay Famiglietti helped identify the Corcoran Bowl, although for much of his career he worked for an agency focused more on what is in outer space than what is beneath the ground. He is a former senior scientist at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the research center in Southern California known for aiding planetary exploration missions.

Scientists at the NASA lab have formed an unusual bond with Corcoran, spending years tracking subsidence there and elsewhere in the San Joaquin Valley by using radar and satellite technology.

Mr. Famiglietti, now the director of the Global Institute for Water Security at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, began warning of severe sinking in the valley based on satellite imagery as early as 2009. Years later, one of his colleagues at the Jet Propulsion Lab, Cathleen Jones, documented more than 30 inches of sinking west of Corcoran.

“There’s no way around it,” Mr. Famiglietti said. “The scale of the bowl that’s been created from the pumping is large and that may be why people don’t perceive it. But a careful analysis would find there is lots of infrastructure potentially at risk.”

Some of that infrastructure has already been damaged.

The Corcoran Irrigation District had to install three lift stations to pump water through ditches. The water used to run on gravity alone, but the sinking created sags in the ditches and caused the water to pool instead of flow through. The district spent \$1.2 million over 10 years on lift stations to help push the water along, costs paid for by farmers.

The sinking land crushed the casings of four drinking-water wells used by the city. Insurance paid for two new wells, but city taxes were used to redrill the other two at a cost of \$600,000.

And there was the levee that was rebuilt for \$10 million in 2017. The levee had sunk from 195 feet when it was built in 1983 to 188 feet in 2017.

“Our residents got hit hard,” said Dustin Fuller, who is the director of the Cross Creek Flood Control District and who led the levee repairs. In addition to the higher property tax bills, some residents bought flood insurance for the first time.

Amec Foster Wheeler Environment and Infrastructure Inc., an engineering company, examined how sinking near Corcoran could affect construction of California’s high-speed rail

line, a section of which is being built along the town's eastern edge. Sinking had altered the topography so much that three flood zones appeared to be merging. The consolidated flood zones could engulf Corcoran and nearby towns in 16 feet of water in a major flood, according to the engineers' report.

The engineers brought their concerns to state agencies. But no one agency was tracking infrastructure damage from sinking, and no actions were taken in response to their report.

Along Highway 43

The land around Corcoran is tied to agriculture, and so is its economy.

The town is known as the home of a tough state prison that once housed Charles Manson. Corcoran rests alongside Highway 43, roughly 200 miles from both Los Angeles to the south and San Francisco to the north. Nearly 30 percent of the town's working-age residents work in the farming industry, and more than 30 percent of residents live in poverty.

Several large agricultural operations surround Corcoran, including Sandridge Partners, the J.G. Boswell Company, Hansen Ranches, the Vander Eyk Dairies and many others. Collectively, they have hundreds of wells pulling water from beneath the flat, fertile fields around Corcoran.

How much underground water is being pumped by farming companies is nearly impossible to determine. California does not require that information to be disclosed.

Boswell is by far the most prominent agricultural operation in the area. The company started in Corcoran in 1921 and has grown into a \$2 billion international enterprise. It has supplied steady work for generations of Kings County families and has been an integral part of the town's identity, even helping to build the high school football stadium.

Boswell operates more wells in the area than most other ag companies, and far deeper ones. It owns 82 active wells around Corcoran, a majority of which plunge either 1,000 to 1,200 feet deep or 2,000 to 2,500 feet deep. The next largest nearby well owner, Vander Eyk Dairies, has 47 wells, only 10 of which are 1,000 feet deep or deeper.

Boswell's status as one of the largest and deepest pumpers of groundwater in the Corcoran area — and its decision to sell off portions of its surface water — has raised questions about its role in Corcoran's subsidence problems.

Some residents and local leaders said they believe that Boswell was leaning more heavily on groundwater for its crops because it had been selling surface water out of the area for substantial profits. In just two sales in 2015 and 2016, one Fresno County water district bought 43,000 acre-feet of Boswell water for \$43.6 million.

"If you're selling off your water, you've got no business farming with groundwater," said Doug Verboon, a Kings County supervisor and farmer.

Others in the area say it is impossible to blame any one water user for Corcoran's complicated and long-running history of sinkage.

“We’re all pumping,” said Gene Kilgore, the general manager of the Corcoran Irrigation District, which installed the lift stations and serves Boswell and other companies. “Every grower is pumping, every city is pumping, and we all play whatever part there is to subsidence.”

Local Boswell representatives said there was not enough data to know which water user had been pumping what amounts. All of the company’s surface water transfers and exchanges have been approved by state water regulators.

Boswell executives at the company’s headquarters in Pasadena did not respond to emails and calls seeking comment.

The owners of Sandridge Partners and Vander Eyk Dairies declined to comment. An executive with Hansen Ranches did not respond to requests for comment.

The drought’s effects

California has been gripped, yet again, by severe drought. The situation will very likely make Corcoran sink even more.

In the 1960s, California built the State Water Project, a water storage and delivery system, to move water from the north to parched lands in the Central Valley and farther south.

Much of the water comes from the ecologically sensitive Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where concerns over endangered fish have limited how much water can be exported. Amid the current drought, farmers have been told to expect only 5 percent of their contracted water allotments.

That means farmers may be forced to pump more groundwater to make up for the lack of surface water. That happened during California’s last prolonged drought, from 2012 to 2016, when Central Valley land sank at high rates.

State lawmakers responded by passing a law aimed at stopping water-related land sinkage. The law, known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, requires that water basins be brought into balance by 2040 — meaning more water cannot be pumped out than goes into the ground.

Karla Nemeth, the director of the state’s Department of Water Resources, said excessive groundwater pumping and its effect on Corcoran were issues that warranted a closer look.

“The plight of Corcoran is the absolute poster child for legacy unmanaged groundwater pumping that is unacceptable in California and that finally gave rise to” the groundwater law, Ms. Nemeth said.

Ana Facio-Krajcer contributed reporting.

This article was produced by [SJV Water](#), the [Center for Collaborative Investigative Journalism \(CCIJ\)](#) and The New York Times. The collaboration between SJV Water and CCIJ was led by the Institute for Nonprofit News as part of a project called “[Tapped Out: Power, justice and water in the West.](#)”

Do you have ideas for content for the ReCAP? We'd love your photos and ideas for stories. Send an email with your ideas to mkfiske@gmail.com



California eyes shuttered malls, stores for new housing

ADAM BEAM / AP / May 31, 2021

California state lawmakers are grappling with a particularly 21st-century problem: What to do with the growing number of shopping malls and big box retail stores left empty by consumers shifting their purchases to the web.

A possible answer in crowded California cities is to build housing on these sites, which already have ample parking and are close to existing neighborhoods.

But local zoning laws often don't allow housing at these locations. Changing the zoning is such a hassle that many developers don't bother trying. And it's often not worth it for local governments to change the designations. They would prefer to find new retailers because sales taxes produce more revenue than residential property taxes.

However, with a stubborn housing shortage pushing prices to all-time highs, state lawmakers are moving to pass new laws to get around those barriers.

A bill that cleared the state Senate last week would let developers build houses on most commercial sites without changing the zoning. Another proposal would pay local governments to change the zoning to let developers build affordable housing.

“There has always been an incentive to chase retail and a disincentive to build housing,” said Sen. Anthony Portantino, a Los Angeles-area Democrat who authored the bill to pay local governments. “There is more dormant and vacant retail than ever.”

If successful, it's believed California would be the first state to allow multi-family housing on commercial sites statewide, said Eric Phillips, vice president of policy and legislation for the California chapter of the American Planning Association. Developers who use the law still would have to obey locally approved design standards. But Phillips said the law would limit local governments' ability to reject the projects.

That's why some local leaders oppose the bill, arguing it undermines their authority.

“City leaders have the requisite local knowledge to discern when and which sites are appropriate for repurposing and which are not,” [wrote Mike Griffiths](#), member of the Torrance City Council and founder of California Cities for Local Control, a group of 427 mayors and council members.

It's a familiar battle in California. While nearly everyone agrees there is an affordable housing shortage, state and local leaders face different political pressures that often derail ambitious proposals. Last year, a bill that would have overridden local zoning laws to let developers build small apartment buildings in neighborhoods reserved for single-family homes died in the state Senate.

Sen. Anna Caballero, a Democrat from Salinas and author of this year's zoning proposal, said her bill is not a mandate. Developers could choose to use the bill or not. The Senate approved the measure 32-2, sending it to the state Assembly for consideration.

“It’s always a challenge when you’re trying to do affordable housing, because there are entrenched interests that don’t want to negotiate and compromise, and we’re working really hard to try to break through that,” she said. “I’m trying to give maximum flexibility to local government because the more that you start telling them how they have to do it, the harder it becomes for them to actually do it.”

Even before the pandemic, big-box retail stores were struggling to adapt as more people began buying things online. In 2019, after purchasing Sears and Kmart, Transformco closed 96 stores across the country — including 29 in California.

The pandemic, of course, accelerated this trend, prompting major retailers like J.C. Penney, Neiman Marcus and J. Crew to file for bankruptcy protection. [An analysis](#) by the investment firm UBS shows online shopping will grow to 25% of all retail sales by 2025. The analysis predicted that up to 100,000 stores across the country could close.

Local governments and developers in California are already trying to redevelop some retail sites. In Salinas, a city of about 150,000 people near the Monterey Peninsula, city officials are working to rezone a closed Kmart. In San Francisco, developers recently announced plans to build nearly 3,000 homes in the parking lot that surrounds Stonestown Mall — a sprawling, 40-acre site that has lost some anchor retail tenants in recent years.

Still, the idea of repurposing shopping centers has divided labor unions and affordable housing advocates, putting one of the Democratic Party's core base of supporters against backers of one of their top policy goals.

Housing advocates love the idea, but they don't like how Democrats want to do it. Both proposals in the Legislature would require developers to use a "skilled and trained" workforce to build the housing. That means a certain percentage of workers must either be enrolled or have completed a state-approved apprenticeship program.

Developers have said while there are plenty of trained workers available in areas like San Francisco and Los Angeles, those workers are scarce in more rural parts of the state, potentially delaying projects in those areas.

California needs to build about 180,000 new housing units per year to keep up with demand, according to the state's latest housing assessment. But it's only managed about 80,000 per year for the past decade. That's one reason the state's median sales price for single-family homes hit a record high \$758,990 in March.

"At a time when we're trying to increase production, we don't believe we should be limiting who can do the work," said Ray Pearl, executive director of the California Housing Consortium, a group that includes affordable housing developers.

Robbie Hunter, president of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, dismissed that argument as just greedy developers trying to maximize their profits.

He said there is no construction project in California that has been delayed because of a lack of workers, adding: "We man every job."

"When there is a demand for workers, we rise with the demand," Hunter said.

Labor unions appear to be winning. A bill in the state Assembly that did not initially require a "skilled and trained" workforce stalled in committee because it did not have enough support.

The legislation is [SB 6](#) and [SB 15](#)

'Waiting to happen': the California region where masks are taboo – and cases are rising

Rural northern California is seeing a troubling rise in Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations, an alarming trend that comes as residents and businesses continue to protest against safety measures and vaccinations – with one Mendocino cafe threatening to charge customers \$5 for wearing a mask.

While the region makes up a small proportion of the state's population, the growth in its caseload has been considerable, and comes at a time when the state overall is enjoying some of the lowest rates of Covid in the country. After largely avoiding the worst of the pandemic, a block of far northern California counties now leads the state with nearly 40 cases per 100,000 residents over the past week, according to [statistics maintained by the Los Angeles Times](#). Tehama county ranked the highest in the LA Times case ratings with 139 cases per 100,000 residents. Meanwhile 10 of the 21 total Covid deaths in nearby Siskiyou county have occurred since the beginning of May.

Related: [‘Our society is totally nuts’: Fauci emails lift lid on life in eye of the Covid storm](#)

The region has long been one of the most forceful in its pushback against measures such as masks, business restrictions and vaccine mandates – and the protests have only continued to gain steam. A cafe in the town of Mendocino made headlines after announcing it will charge customers a \$5 fee if they order while wearing a mask. It also threatened to charge \$5 to anyone “caught bragging about your vaccine”.

“It’s about time the proponents of these ineffective government measures start paying for the collateral damage they have collectively caused,” the [cafe owner Chris Castleman told NBC News](#). He also offered a 50% discount to customers who threw their masks in the trash.

George Rutherford, a professor of epidemiology at the University of California, San Francisco, said the current situation feels inevitable. “I was waiting for this to happen,” he said, adding that the outbreaks mirror trends occurring in southern and eastern Oregon, just north of California’s border. “It shows you where vaccination is lagging and transmission is taking place.”

Kerri Schuette, the program manager of Shasta county’s public health department, said her county had seen jumps in cases and hospitalizations since mid-May, but new cases have come down a bit since last week.

“We are hopeful that this last jump won’t lead to more deaths,” she said. “But our hospitalizations have increased, so that is concerning.”

About 43% of Californians statewide have been vaccinated, but residents in the north have been slower to adopt. In Tehama, Del Norte and Lassen counties, vaccination rates are among the worst in the state with only about a quarter of the population having received their full doses, according to [data provided by the New York Times](#).

“We are working to address vaccine hesitancy,” said Schuette of Shasta’s 30% vaccination rate.

At the same time, she said residents were rapidly abandoning the precautions urged by health officials.

“Our adherence to masking and social distancing measures has dramatically dropped,” she said. “And it was never great to begin with.”

The region has been a hotbed of protest against the closures and restrictions implemented by the state’s governor, Gavin Newsom, which were some of the earliest and most stringent in the US. The backlash has had political consequences – currently three supervisors in Shasta county are being threatened with recalls for supporting Covid safety measures, and the county’s meetings are regularly mobbed with protesters calling for an end to business restrictions and mask-wearing.

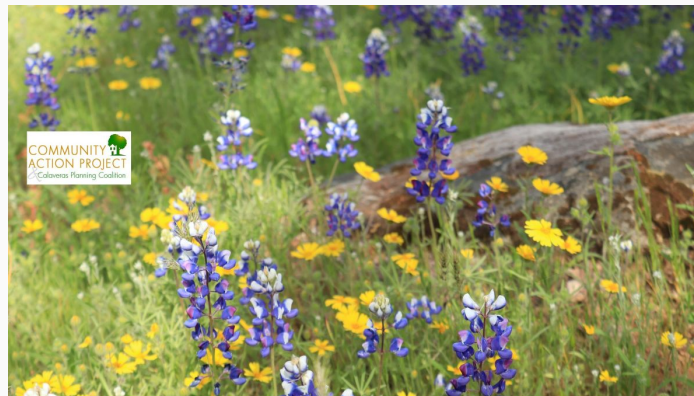
California law still requires masks to be worn in all indoor spaces outside the home, including businesses. The state expects a change in rules will come with the governor’s promised reopening of the state on 15 June.

Rutherford noted that the population in these northern counties was too small to have a major effect on the state’s numbers, but worried that transmission could stubbornly linger in these areas.

Even if nearby regions, such as the San Francisco Bay Area, achieve herd immunity with vaccination rates as high as 80% to 90%, as long as the virus continues to find new people to infect, it will never really disappear, he said.

“There’s going to be residual people who just won’t get vaccinated,” he said. “That can sustain transmission in the population. Those counties may not have enough vaccination to achieve herd immunity.”

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Funding Opportunities Newsletter for June/July



This is an electronic newsletter published every two months containing information on upcoming grant and funding opportunities for the Sierra Nevada region. The newsletter includes federal, state, and private foundation funders as well as additional resources and information related to grant funding. The Sierra

Sitting Shiva

BY TODD DAVIS

If you find the bones of a bear, sit down and stay with them.

The dead desire our company. Touch each one—scapula, tibia, ulna—even the tiniest bones of the hind and forefeet, the curve of every claw. Just out of sight, a thrush will sing.

Bird song is a way to speak in secret. Find comfort in the arbutus that whitens each March on the old logging road.

Wait until dark. A full moon will rise from the bear's skull, showing what she thought of us. Hold the moon-skull in your lap,

stroke the cranial ridges. You may see your dead father scaling the talus to the blueberry field where this bear ate, mouth sated and purpled by the sweetest fruit. Your mother will be in the room on the second floor of the house, packing and then unpacking a box of your father's clothes. It's hard to give up this life. But we must. Others are waiting behind us.



Orion Magazine: Orion Magazine | Sitting Shiva



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